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File Construction Costs

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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No. 2 Capitol Architect Has Designs

By Jack Anderson

Assistant Capitol Architect Mario Campioli is conducting a backstage campaign to extend the historic west front of the Capitol building. If he succeeds, the architectural combine he once worked for will get more than \$2 million in fees.

At age 60, Campioli has largely taken over the duties of the kindly, doddering, 79-year-old Capitol Architect, J. George Stewart.

Campioli has whispered warnings to congressmen and slipped stories to newsmen that historic chunks of sandstone might fall on some distinguished heads if the west front isn't extended. He has cautioned congressmen that even the vibrations of jets, flying over the Capitol, could shake down pieces of the building. To emphasize the hazard, he has barred helicopters from operating too close to Capitol Hill.

In all his lobbying, however, he has neglected to mention that his former associates will benefit if his warnings are heeded.

The talented, Parma-born Campioli says he has never collected a penny from his old bosses—DeWitt, Poor and Shelton—since he joined the government in 1959. But he concedes they have honored him mightily in other ways.

Some of them proposed him, for example, as a Fellow of

the American Institute of Architects—the highest honor in the architectural world. Indeed, he sought their support as a Fellow, then pushed construction plans that would bring them high fees.

"I feel my conscience is clear," he told my associate, Leslie Whitten.

The AIA, which turned down Campioli as a Fellow despite his distinguished endorsements, is now fighting the \$45-million west front extension as a boondoggle. The architects of the AIA acknowledge that the west front needs repairs but claim it can be restored without ruining the last remaining portion of the original Capitol.

Modern Versailles

They also question how many escalators, dining rooms and hideaway offices are needed at \$166 per square foot—five times more than it cost to build the behemoth Rayburn House Office Building, the most expensive office structure in the world, which now stands on Capitol Hill as a monument to congressional self-indulgence, lack of taste and lack of propriety.

Part of the staggering price for extending the west front will go to the architects—a combine that includes not only Roscoe DeWitt, Alfred Easton Poor and Jesse Shelton, but also Albert Homer Swanke, Fred Hardison and Alan Stanford.

Campioli was a valued employee of DeWitt, Poor and Shelton from 1957 to 1959. Poor, DeWitt and Swanke also endorsed Campioli's 1962 bid to become a Fellow. A confidential memo from the Capitol architect's office shows how these names weave in and out of multi-million-dollar Capitol Hill contracts.

The architects for the \$90 million James Madison Memorial Library, for example, include DeWitt, Poor, Shelton and A.P. Almond, yet another backer of the Campioli bid as an AIA Fellow. The architects' fee for preliminary planning, according to the confidential memo, is \$435,000. It may go as high as \$4 million when the library is built.

On the Rayburn building's underground garages, Shelton and Almond are listed in the memo as getting \$654,000. DeWitt turns up again as an architect who split the \$924,472 fee for remodeling the Cannon House office building.

On Capitol Hill, incidentally, the architects' fees run as high as 8½ per cent while in the rest of the federal government, the limit is 6 per cent.

The drive for extending the west front, meanwhile, is led by Speaker John McCormack whose colleagues, sentimental about their patriarchs, don't want to hurt his feelings—particularly now that his office is under fire for influence peddling. They'd rather lay out

\$45 million of the taxpayers' money to extend the west front as a marble monument to "Old Jawn."

Hawaiian High Hats

The military mind is at work in Hawaii. This is bad news for tall soldiers who like low-slung autos or compacts. In fact, if their racy tastes lead them to buy or rent such cars, they may be courting a court-martial.

That is the warning of a recent order by the brass hats of the Army's Hawaii Command. It says, in part:

"Corrective action must be taken immediately by all concerned to halt the large number of uniform violations . . . Headgear is a required item of uniform for persons outdoors including persons traveling in military, private or public vehicles. When purchasing or renting a vehicle, be sure the headgear can be worn properly in the vehicle before buying or renting it."

Delays on Pollution

With great fanfare, President Nixon appointed an Environmental Quality Council last May to prepare the grand strategy for keeping our atmosphere, lakes, rivers and streams free from pollution.

The council, whose membership includes Vice President Agnew and six Cabinet officers, has held only one meeting since it was organized.

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